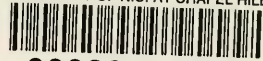


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resulted in a high my father made when he  
a shiping through the Chesapeake nation, from Old  
port to the Chesapeake River Town in 1792 and the town  
of a letter from you will send to the chief of the nation  
proposing the separation of hostilities and exchange  
of prisoners. This was about the close of the negotiation  
the negotiators were then all under arms. By the aid  
of our interpreter he performed the service. The chief  
agreed to M<sup>rs</sup> Smith's proposition, and peace was  
restored. This incident together with some other  
matters relating to our family history make  
up the paper furnished the Enfranchised committee  
They said they would purchase these matters. The



DR. C. D. SMITH.

Geologist of Minnesota.

FRANKLIN, N. C.

1892

Franklin, N. C.,

1892

My dear Sir,

Dear Sir

Your card of the 11<sup>th</sup> was before me. I

sent you with pleasure copy of my brief history of

Indian country. I have published any thing necessary

to its history, but will of it. I furnished for the

Board of Commissioners a paper, containing imperfect

committees have not communicated with our sister  
the celebration last summer. I wish my older  
brothers had written the incidents of my father's  
perilous journey while he was yet a live. My sketch  
of Mason county history was with a view to the  
preservation of facts for the future historian. Had  
each county in the State put in form and preserved  
the early incidents and facts, we would have a  
magnificent and charming history of our old  
Tartan mother.

I am confined to my room  
and write on a board across my legs, Very Truly  
C. D. Smith

W 2

A BRIEF HISTORY OF

MACON COUNTY,

NORTH CAROLINA.

---

BY DR. C. D. SMITH.

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FRANKLIN, N. C.  
FRANKLIN PRESS PRINT.  
1891.



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*Revised Edition 26 Jan 1891*

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## Census of Macon County.

CENSUS BULLETIN No. 122, gives the Population of North Carolina by Minor Civil Divisions. We extract from it the population of MACON COUNTY as follows:

TOWNSHIPS.	1890.	1880.
Burningtown,.....	682	597
Cartoogechaye,.....	819	584
Cowee,.....	1,263	1,066
Ellijay,.....	812	689
Franklin, including town,.....	2,249	1,840
Highlands, including town,.....	788	436
Millshoal,.....	699	671
Nantahala, .....	1,124	855
Smith's Bridge,.....	1,123	890
Sugar Fork,.....	543	436
Franklin town,.....	281	207
Highlands town,.....	233	82
MACON COUNTY,.....	10,102	8,064

80436





# A BRIEF HISTORY OF MACON COUNTY, N. C.

## PART I.

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I propose to write a brief history of Macon County so far as I have been able to gather the facts. There has heretofore been, and still exists an unaccountable indifference in particular communities in regard to their local history—the preservation of all the notable events—the historic facts showing their rise and progress. This is especially true of this great plateau of country lying west of the Blue Ridge in North Carolina. This neglect on the part of the early settlers to keep a true historic record of the early settlement, progress, development and succeeding changes of population and civilization, is a culpable injustice to the posterity of the strong, resolute men who, on the retirement of the savages, took possession of the country and subjected its lands to the arts of agriculture and civilization. It is both interesting and instructive to know something of the men who first built habitations in the wild forests of Macon County and introduced Christian civilization and customs where only savage life and customs had prevailed from away back beyond the historic era. These sturdy pioneers

flocked into this valley in 1820 only seventy years ago, and yet I have found it very difficult to get together the leading facts of history for so short a period. There ought to be in some county department a complete and official report of the commissioners having the matter in hand of the survey of the lands of the county then ordered, the location and survey of the county site (the town of Franklin), and a report of the surveyor-in-chief giving a complete diagram of the lands surveyed. The commissioners reported to the State authorities and there are some files in the Secretary's office. No such record can be found in the Register's office of Macon County. Such record would, however, make an instructive and attractive feature in our county records and would interest the student of history and the lovers of antiquarian lore. A proud spirited Board of Commissioners ought to take steps to supply this deficiency in our county records.

After what seemed at one time, would prove to be a fruitless search, I found the record of the organization of the county, which took place

nine years after the survey of the lands and the location of the site for the town of Franklin. All back of that is blank so far as any official record is concerned. And for other valuable information which I now proceed to give I have had to rely mainly upon the statements of the few remaining individuals who were participants in the work of survey and location referred to.

It has been a mooted question as to whether Macon County ever belonged to the territory of Buncombe County. The facts show that it did not, the Buncombe line never having extended further west than the Meigs and Freeman line. The territory now embraced in Macon and a portion each of the counties of Jackson and Swain, was acquired by treaty from the Cherokee Indians in 1817—19. During the summer and fall of 1819 a few whites came amongst the Indians with a view to purchasing when the lands should come into market. During that fall many of the Indians moved west of the Nantahala chain of mountains, but the entire tribe did not leave the Tennessee Valley until the fall of 1820. In the spring of 1820 the State Commissioners, Jesse Franklin and James Meabin in accordance with the provisions of an act of the General Assembly, came to the Tennessee Valley, now the chief part of Macon County and organized, for the survey of lands, a corps of surveyors of whom Capt. Robert Love, a son

of Gen. Thomas Love, who settled the place at the bridge where Capt. T. M. Angel recently lived, was chief. Robert Love had been an honored and brave Captain in the war of 1812, was much respected on account of his patriotic devotion to American liberty, and was consequently a man of large influence.

The work of survey went rapidly forward, as there were five or six distinct companies in the field. The commissioners first determined upon the Watanga Plains where the late Mr. Watson lived for the county site for a court house and four hundred acres (the amount appropriated by the State for that purpose) was located and surveyed. There was, however, a good deal of murmuring and protest among the surveyors, especially by Capt. Love, the chief, who favored the present site or the flat ridge where Mrs. H. T. Sloan now resides. To harmonize with their employes and to give more general satisfaction the Commissioners, who had no personal interest in the matter, proposed to call together the entire corps of surveyors and leave it to a majority vote of them.

This proposition was agreed to and the respective companies of surveyors were ordered to assemble. On counting the vote the present site of Franklin had a majority. This result was mainly brought about through the influence of Capt. Love, the chief of the corps. In compliance with their proposition

terms a survey was ordered by the commissioners, the four hundred acres were located and a portion of it laid off into lots including the court house square. I obtained a few years ago the foregoing facts from the late Rev. John McDowell who was a member of Capt. Love's corps and a participant in the election. I have been thus particular in giving them in order to settle any dispute that might hereafter arise as to the location of the town of Franklin. The work of survey as mapped out by the Commissioners having been finished, a general auction sale of the lands to the highest bidder took place at Waynesville in Sept. 1820.

The settlement of the town of Franklin commenced at once. The first house built in Franklin was built by Joshua Roberts on the lot now occupied by Mr. Jackson Johnston. It was a small round log cabin. But the first house proper was one built of hewn logs, by Irad S. Hightower on the lot where Mr. N. G. Allman's hotel stands. It now constitutes a part of that building. That first house passed into the hands of the late Capt. N. S. Jarrett, thence to Gideon F. Morris, and from him to John R. Allman and then to the present owner, N. G. Allman. There were several log cabins built about that time, but the order in which it was done and the claims to priority I have been unable to ascertain.

Lindsey Fortune built a cabin on

the lot where the Franklin House, or Jarrett Hotel now stands. Samuel Robinson built on the lot now occupied by Mrs. Robinson. Silas McDowell first built on the lot where stands the residence of D. C. Cunningham. Dillard Love built the first house on Mr. Trotter's lot. N. S. Jarrett built on the lot owned and occupied by Sam L. Rogers. John F. Dobson first improved the corner lot now owned by C. C. Smith. James K. Gray built the second house made of hewn logs on the lot owned by Mrs. Dr. A. W. Bell. Jesse R. Siler, one of the first settlers built the house at the foot of the town hill where Mr. Geo. A. Jones now resides. He also built the second house on the Gov. Robinson lot and the brick store and dwelling owned at present, by Capt. A. P. Munday. James W. Guinn or Mr. Whitaker built the house owned and occupied by M. Jackson Johnston.

I am indebted for much of this information about the early settlement of Franklin to the late James K. Gray and Silas McDowell. There is one other fact worthy of notice. John R. Allman opened the first hotel in Franklin. Shortly after this Jesse R. Siler opened his house at the "foot of the hill" and these two houses furnished the hotel accommodations here for many years. These are the facts of history about Franklin so far as they go. Though meagre and unsatisfactory, they may be interesting to future generations.



## PART II.

After the land sale in September, 1820, at which a large part of the surveyed land was disposed of to the highest bidders, the Tennessee Valley was settled quite rapidly, but it was not until the spring of 1829 that a county government was organized. During this interim all the legal business of the entire territory west from the Tuckaseige river to the Tusquittee and Valley River chain of mountains was transacted by the county authorities of Haywood county and in the Superior court for said county. I remember distinctly the case of a man living within the territory of the present Smith's Bridge township who was tried and convicted in the Superior court for Haywood county for hog stealing, and for this crime received twenty-nine lashes at the public whipping-post in the town of Waynesville. This is the only case of the kind that ever happened in the territory of Macon county. During this interim the late Col. Joab L. Moore, who resided near Franklin, held for four years the position of Deputy Sheriff under Col. James McKee, who was at that time Sheriff of Haywood county. Col. Moore did all the business pertaining to that office in the new territory, and was regarded as a very efficient and faithful officer. This transition covering the formative period of our first popula-

tion finally crystalized into the elements for self county government. Hence, at the session of the General Assembly for 1828-29 an act was passed to create a new county and the name of Macon was given it in honor of Nathaniel Macon, who was a pure statesman and a perfect specimen of an old time American patriot and gentleman. The law creating the county appointed thirty-three leading citizens to be qualified and to serve as the first Board of Magistrates. I here quote the minutes showing the organization of the county:

*"Minutes of a Court for Macon County, Held for Said County on the 4th Monday in March, 1829. Agreeable to an Act of the General Assembly Made and Provided for Said County."*

Present and organizing said county, from the county of Haywood Wm. Deaver, Esqr., who appointed Joshua Roberts to administer the oath to the following Justices of the Peace for said county, to-wit: Aaron Pinson, Saul Smith, Jesse R. Siler, John Howard, Jacob Siler, John Moore, John Cook, Enos Shield, Jonathan Phillips, Bynum W. Bell, Benjamin S. Brittain, Joseph Welch, Michael Wikle, Thomas Rogers, Wm. F. McKee, Andrew Cathey, George Dickey, Edward L. Poindexter, Ira S. Hightower, James Buchanan, Wm.

Tatham, Wm. H. Bryson, Matthew Patterson, Barak Norton, Wm. Wilson, Thos. Love, Jr., Mark Coleman, Hugh Gibbs, Asaph Enloe, Robert Huggins, John Wild, Henry Dryman and Jeffers a Bryson, who, after taking said oath agreeable to law, proceeded to appoint a clerk for said county. After balloting for said appointment, it appeared to the satisfaction of the court that Nathan B. Hyatt was duly elected clerk."

The court having thus been duly organized, consisting of thirty-three magistrates, they proceeded, by ballot, to elect all the county officers—the election continuing from day to day. John Dobson, father of our countyman, Capt. J. W. Dobson, was elected first County Register, Bynum W. Bell first Sheriff, Montaville Patton first County Solicitor, Jacob Siler first County Surveyer, Michael Wikle first County Trustee, Nathan Smith first Coroner, Robert Huggins first County Ranger and James K. Gray, first Standard Keeper. James Potcet was the first Constable appointed by the new court. Of that first Board of Magistrates I knew nearly all personally. Something over sixty-two years have passed away since that first Board of Magistrates was organized into a court. Of the whole number there is but one now living, the venerable William H. Bryson, who resides in Jackson county. Taken as a body, for general intelligence, integrity of character and fortitude and fidelity

in the administration of law coming within their jurisdiction, they suffer nothing in comparison with the very best County Boards of Magistrates within the State at the present writing. For public spirit and patriotic labor in the direction of county development and in building and keeping in repair public roads for public comfort and convenience, they have not had their equal in the county for the last half century. If we take the Scriptural axiom as true that the "tree is known by its fruit", then the deterioration of our public roads does not place the present population in an enviable light when compared with the population of Macon County fifty years ago. This comparison stands out with special prominence when we consider the present unaccountable disinclination of our population to render even a day's labor on repairs to say nothing of the more needed improvements on our public roads. To tell a plain historic truth in plain language, our fathers, from patriotic motives and with a sense of public and personal comfort and convenience, and prompted by county pride, built our county roads, and the present generation is too trifling to keep them up. As an illustration of the spirit of the men who first settled Macon County, it was agreed that the county should build a road leading from Franklin down the Tennessee River to the mouth of the Tuckaseige River to connect with a turn-pike for which Joseph Welch

had a charter to the Tennessee State line. Accordingly the court appointed a Jury to lay off and mark the way for said road commencing at the junction of the Tennessee and Tuckaseige rivers and to divide it into lots as near equal as their limited means would enable them to do. The jury, laid and marked off seven lots, No. 1 commencing at the Tuckaseige Ford and No. 7 terminating not far from the Shallow Ford on Tennessee river. There was some sort of lottery in assigning this work to the respective captains' militia companies. I suppose there was drawing of straws or perhaps numbers on slips of paper. The record reads on the appointment of the respective overseers: "This lot falls to Capt. Love's company" &c. &c. to the end of the chapter. It seems that there were six militia companies at that time in the county. It may be well to mention here the overseers of the respective lots, and the Captain's company assigned to each lot, as the building of this road furnishes an interesting and instructive chapter in the history of Macon County. Henry Addington No. 1, Capt. Love's company; Lot No. 2, Robert Johnson, Capt. Johnson's company; Lot No. 3, Benjamin S. Brittain, Capt. McKee's company; Lot No. 4, Jacob Palmer, Capt. Smith's company,—now Smith's Bridge Township; Lot No. 5, Joshua Ammons, Capt. George's company. Lot No. 6 being

ded into three sections with Jesse R. Siler, Joseph Welch and James Whitaker as the overseers of the respective sections with special hands assigned them. Lot No. 7 had Wm Bryson as overseer. This lot fell to Capt. Wilson's company. This lot terminated some where about the Shallow Ford, the road from Franklia having been somewhat worked out to that point. The foregoing lots were worked out by respective companies—the hands forming themselves into messes, taking wagons to haul their provisions, tools, camp-fixtures &c. The Smith's Bridge company had the lot which lay between the 18 and 19 mile-posts. The mess consisting of my brothers and some neighbors took me along as cook and camp-boy. There I saw the men taking rock from the river with the water breast deep to aid in building wharves. They remained until the work was finished. This work was done without compensation and for the public good. It illustrates the sort of stuff of which our fathers were made—the spirit of patriotism that prompted a noble race of men to sacrifice and work for their country's good. This work done they returned home, feeling that they had rendered a service that was to benefit their county and their posterity.

The overseers of the roads generally, of that time, were of the best men in the county. That first Board of Magistrates did not believe



in any class distinction in their demands for public service. I find in the records of that first court an order appointing Joshua Roberts the most prominent member of our local bar the overseer of one of our roads. This record set me to thinking. There is a whole lot of lawyers in Western Carolina, who are not the peers of Joshua Roberts for respectability and legal attainments who might be utilized by our county authorities by making road overseers of them and thereby causing them to render some good, honest service to their country. It would at least be a healthy exercise and may be it would bring the rebellious spirit of our young *American patriots* against road duty to proper terms. At all events it might prevent the boastful young men of the present time from fighting their overseers when they demand reasonable and legal service of them. Try it, Esquires, and let us see if there is any blood of our noble sires in the present generation—any pride of character—any love of the general brotherhood which binds together the people of a county and without which its good name and prosperity cannot long continue.

### PART III.

The Courts of Pleas and Quarter Sessions of that day as they were called, were regular jury courts, and I give the names of the first venire summoned to serve as jurors, for the June term following:

- 1 Wymer Siler,
- 2 Jonathan Whiteside,
- 3 Jacob Hice,
- 4 Wm. Cochram,
- 5 Benjamin Johnston,
- 6 Wm. McLure,
- 7 Peter Ledford,
- 8 Martin Nortou,
- 9 John Lamm,
- 10 John Addington,
- 11 Matthew Davis,
- 12 James Whitaker,

- 13 Henry Addington,
- 14 Micheal Wikle,
- 15 Wm. Welch, Sr.,
- 16 Samuel Smith,
- 17 Geo. T. Ledford,
- 18 Ebenezer Newton,
- 19 Joseph Welch,
- 20 Luke Barnard,
- 21 George Dickey,
- 22 Zachariah Cabe,
- 23 Mark Coleman,
- 24 Léwis Vandyke,
- 25 Thomas Love, Sr.,
- 26 March Addington,
- 27 Jacob Trammel,
- 28 John Dobson,
- 29 Andrew Patton,
- 30 George Black,

- 31 Isaac Manney,
- 32 John M. Angel,
- 33 John Gillespie,
- 34 Joseph Chambers,
- 35 John Howard,
- 36 Jacob Siler.

This venire was composed of typical and representative men of the early population of Macon County. It would be hard to find an abler body of jurors, even now, in any county in the State. It is true they were a style of men different from the present edition. They were men of sound minds, of the strictest integrity, profoundly impressed with the obligations of law and justice and for old fashioned courtly deportment one towards another, and for manly bearing in the discharge of their duties as conservators of public peace and justice, they have no superiors at the present day. Many of them came to the years of manhood in and about the close of the Revolutionary war which achieved American independence—at a time and under conditions that “tried men’s souls” and when “the survival of the fittest” gave to us a race of men brave, true and thoroughly impregnated with a love for those rights and that justice which cost so great a price of blood. That love was quickened and intensified by the war of 1812 when the mother country, for the second time, attempted to enslave freemen and levy unjust tribute upon this grand and productive country of ours. Is it

any wonder that men raised in such times and familiar with the heroes who staked *their all* on the struggle against oppression and injustice should be eminently qualified to try all legal disputes between their compeers and mete out justice to the violators of the code?

I have a distinct recollection of many of the members of that jury. They would compare favorably with any similar body of men, then or now. In stature they were above the ordinary juryman and were decidedly manly in appearance with a bearing expressive of firmness and a will to do the right. They were very affable gentlemen and well read for men of their times. In fact, they constituted a brotherhood of patriots who loved and labored for their country’s honor and their country’s good. This constitutes the highest type of citizenship for a commonwealth. Such obedience to law and order—such devotion to the public good—such fidelity to public trust and such unity of action and purpose in behalf of the well-being of the whole as characterized those men furnish a guarantee of a prosperous and happy people.

At that first court for Macon county the court appointed the following named persons commissioners whose duty it should be to draft plans and specifications for a court house and jail for the county of Macon and directing them to advertise the letting out the same to the lowest bidder at



the next term of the court June following, viz: "Jesse R. Siler, Thomas Kinsey, Luke Barnard, Mark Coleman, James Whitaker, Aaron Pinson, John Bryson, Sr." I find in the "*Minutes*" of the June term of the court for 1829 that the contract for building the court house was awarded to Col. David Coleman "at three thousand and eight hundred dollars" with Gen. Thomas Love and Zachariah Cabe as securities for the faithful performance of the contract. At the same time the contract for building the jail was awarded to Col. Benjamin S. Brittain for "twenty nine hundred and ninety five dollars," who gave as securities for the performance of the contract, Joseph Welch, Jeremiah R. Pace and John Hall. The masons who undertook the brick work of the court house were Samuel Lyle and Dr. T. T. Young, of Washington county, Tennessee. They were good honest workmen in their line. The brick they manufactured were of excellent quality and the house they built would have stood for a half century longer. But in style and capacity it was wholly inadequate to the needs of the present population and from sheer necessity gave way to the substantial and commodious new one which now occupies the site of the old one. For the new and much needed court house the public are mainly indebted to a few public spirited and patriotic surviving sons of the fathers of the county.

We are further reminded of the times and patriotic character of the early settlers, in the manner and spirit with which they served the public interest. I find in the "*Minutes*" for March term 1829, with a court house and jail to build, this order: "Ordered by the Court, that the State tax be 20 cents, and fifty cents on the poll—for public buildings 12½ cents on each poll, for to defray county charges 5 cents—for weights and measures on each 300 dollars value of land equal to one poll." This order is rather unique in style, but it brings to our knowledge the rate of taxation. The wide difference between the taxes of 1829 and 1891 is indeed worthy of our serious consideration. The present population complain most bitterly of the heavy burden of taxation under which they drag out their weary lives. I believe that in the main they lay this sin at the door of ring-men and the extravagance of officials. Let us see how this is. Our fathers believed that they owed a debt to good government—to the faithful administration of law and the conservation of public peace and morality, and they patriotically undertook to perform the public service without compensation. I can well remember the good cheer which prevailed when the people gathered at the quarterly courts to transact the county business and such other business as came within the jurisdiction of a quarterly court jury. It seemed

to be a sort of ovation when they could meet and conserve the public interest. But the last third of a century has developed new ideas and methods for the public service. Indeed it may be said of this generation as Robert Burns said of the Scotch youth in his day:

"That heedless laddies  
Should think they better were inform'd  
Than their auld daddies."

Losing that patriotic spirit which prompted their noble fathers to the performance of a public service without a pecuniary reward, they commenced to murmur about the hardships of the public service without a *per diem* compensation. Nor did they cease this howl for a paltry sum until they secured the coveted prize. Then of course came taxation in order to raise the funds to meet the demand. It presents, in fact, the odd spectacle of a people taxing themselves that they might get it back in a draft upon the county treasury. It is the necessity of this self imposed new order of things that makes the difference between the taxes of the present and sixty two years ago. It has created and fostered a mercenary spirit in the conduct of all public affairs, than which there is no greater bane to all civil and political parity. This mercenary spirit is a poison that works imperceptibly but none the less surely. It has cost kings their crowns and republics their liberty and perpetuity. It is especially insidious in

public affairs, and there can be little doubt that it has been a potent agent in weakening public virtue. It has, indeed, been a fruitful source of the perjury and bribery that now disgraces our civilization—that corrupts our public officials—that defeats the administration of justice and threatens the permanency of our noble principles of government. It had its beginning in little matters but has grown to dangerous proportions, and the end is not yet. Perhaps the reader will consider this an unpardonable digression. While I admit that it is not *narrative* I claim that it is nevertheless *history* and as such commends itself to the sober consideration of all.

Little as mankind may think about it one generation impresses itself upon another. And singularly enough, the further removed, as a general rule, each generation is from the original stock the feebler becomes the impression of the original type. This is the history of nations and commonwealths. I mean this to apply, not to mere conditions of luxury and style under which lie a vast amount of moral obliquity, but to those nobler traits of heart and brain which constitute real worth of character and qualify men to bear up the pillars of good government and a sound public morality. Let the candid reader compare the prevalent disinclination of the populace of to-day to perform any public service only from mercenary considerations—the gen-

eral spirit of insubordination to law and authority whenever it conflicts with their private prejudices and personal whims, with the ready and cheerful compliance with the public demands for the public good, rendered by our fathers of sixty years ago, and he must be convinced of the truth of this axiom. This chapter is written not in a spirit of vindictiveness or the mere love of complaint,

but with a view to awakening the public mind to a sense of a prevalent evil, and with a hope thereby to induce a return to healthier methods and a more loyal and patriotic course in the conduct of public affairs. Should this result in stirring up a spirit of emulation of the noble men who subdued the wilds of Macon county to the arts of Christian civilization, I will have gained the coveted reward.

#### PART IV.

The manners and customs of a people usually form a fair index to their leading traits of character. By this rule I propose to speak of some of the customs of the people of Macon county from sixty to seventy years ago. While the customs of society were not then so airish as now there was among the more prominent families a quiet unobtrusive native dignity and sense of propriety expressive of true man and womanhood upon which the arts of fashion have not made any improvement. The matter of courting among young people was done in different style from the present, yet it had the merit of being honest and straight. And although, incidents in some of the courtships of those days furnished matter for amusement and laughter, the resulting marriages were usually happy and prosperous. A regular dude could not have got in his work

of nonsense and deception amongst those people. There were no dukes nor princes to delude the giddy and foolish with high sounding titles without merit, and less capacity for conjugal happiness. Merit then consisted in sound native brains, honest industry, sobriety and frugality. Whatever of goodness and usefulness there is in the present generation has come from such source. Whatever education teaches or results in idleness, deteriorates manhood and womanhood. The old classic adage is as true of woman as it is of man: "An idle man's brain is the devil's work-shop." Nor does refinement, so called, alter or modify this verdict.

It was the custom in those early days not to rely for help exclusively upon hired labor. In harvesting small grain crops the sickle was mostly used. When a crop was ripe the neighbors were notified and gathered



in to reap and shock up the crop. The manner was for a dozen or more men to cut through the field, then hang their sickles over their shoulders and bind back. The boys gathered the sheaves together and the old men shocked them up. The corn crops were usually gathered in and thrown in great heaps alongside of the cribs. The neighbors were invited and whole days and into the nights were often spent in husking out a single crop. I have seen as many as eighty or ninety men at a time around my father's corn heap. If a house or barn or stable was to be raised the neighbors were on hand and the building was seen under roof. Likewise if a man had a heavy clearing, it was no trouble to have an ample force to handle and put in heaps the heaviest logs. It was no unusual thing for a man to need one or two thousand rails for fencing. All he had to do was to proclaim that he would have a "*rail mauling*" on a given day, and bright and early the neighbors were on the ground and the rails were made before sundown. This custom of mutual aid, cultivated a feeling of mutual dependence and brotherhood, and resulted in the most friendly and neighborly intercourse. Indeed, each man seemed to be on the lookout for his neighbors' comfort and welfare as well as his own. It made a community of broad, liberal minded people, who despite the tongue of gossip and an occasional fistcuff in hot blood,

lived in peace and good will one toward another. There was then less selfishness and cold formality than now. This difference is not for the want of any natural disposition or good impulses, but as a result of the force of custom and habit. Indeed our social and moral tempers are very much the result of our habits and customs. Any method which discards the habit of neighborly interchange of good deeds and mutual helpfulness, breeds and fosters selfishness. This leads legitimately to the withdrawal of each family into a sort of community of its own, unconcerned for the comfort and welfare of others. This, in its turn, affects the manners of a people. It freezes out that warmth and good cheer so characteristic of our fathers of seventy years ago, and brings upon the stage a set of cavaliers in deportment whose good offices are rendered on the basis of pecuniary benefit. Such is the change from the primitive customs here referred to, to the new methods, and I leave the candid reader to judge of the result. I am free to admit that there has been improvement along some lines, such for instance as that of education, the building of church houses, style of dress etc., but I am sure that there has been none in the sterner traits of character, generosity, manliness, patriotism, integrity and public spirit. There was another custom in those bygone days which to the present generation seems extremely primitive

and rude, but which when analyzed shows a strong sense of honor and manliness of character. To settle minor disputes and differences whether for imaginary or real personal wrongs there were occasional fist-cuffs. Then it sometimes occurred in affairs of this kind that whole neighborhoods and communities took an interest. I have known county arrayed against county, and state against state, for the belt in championship, for manhood and skill in a hand-to-hand tussel between local bullies. When these contests took place, the custom was for the parties to go into the ring. The crowd of spectators demanded fairness and honor. If any one was disposed to show *foul play* he was withheld or in the attempt promptly chastised by some bystander. Then again, if either party in the fight resorted to any weapon whatever other than his physical appendages, he was at once *branded and denounced as a coward*, and was avoided by his former associates. While this custom was brutal in its practice there was a bold outcropping of character in it, for such affairs were conducted upon the most punctilious points of *honor*. Remember this, young man, to the day of your death. I remember that on one occasion, I think it was a court week, a man by the name of Kean came from Tennessee to Franklin. He had quite a reputation in his state as a local bully. He paraded up and down the street making

all sorts of boasts and banters. The truth is he had come to carry off the belt for manhood. The very boys in the street were roused to hot blood in behalf of what they regarded as the honor of their county and state. One of our first Board of Magistrates, Edward L. Poindexter, was known to be a man of great physical powers. He was a North Carolinian of the old type, and no doubt, partly prompted by state pride, he made up his mind to tackle the Tennessee bully. The result was that after a long and manly struggle the Tennessean went away next day all bruised and sore with his game feathers fallen and drooping all around him. This custom illustrates the times, and I have introduced it more for the sake of contrast than a desire to parade it before the public.

How marked the difference between then and now. The custom now is to fight with all kinds of deadly weapons, knives, razors, pistols, and in fact with any and every kind of weapons that comes to hand. From the mere stripling who is a novice in crime to the old offender who has grown gray in iniquity, a large number of men now carry pistols. In defense of the habit, it is usual to plead personal protection and changed conditions. Analysis of the real cause for this habit, together with a long series of observations, shows that it grows out of about three conditions, viz; cowardice, a thirst for blood, or a conscious-

ness of guilt for some offence and consequent fear of arrest and punishment for it. The most common of these three specifications is, no doubt, cowardice. The young man, especially, who stuffs a pistol into his pocket betrays a sinister purpose not to observe the proprieties of a gentleman, and not to confine himself to good company, and his cowardice prompts him to arm himself with a pistol. As a rule it is the coward who first uses his pistol and is almost uniformly first to shoot. Conscious of having violated the proprieties of a gentleman, or of having wronged a fellow being, with the first intimation that he will be required to account for it, and prompted by a craven spirit he whips out his pistol and commences shooting. It would perhaps be a great mercy to a certain class of young men, were they sent to the penitentiary for the act of carrying a pistol before their cowardly souls are stained with innocent blood.

There is another class — a sort of nondescript — who carry pistols. They can give no valid reason why they carry them other than a mere desire to do so. This class is mostly of small mental caliber. They possess a strange sort of vanity—are deluded with the idea that they are an objects of both fear and admiration among timid people. I can best illustrate this senseless vanity by relating an incident in the life of an East Tennessean, who in the ol-

den times used to carry boat loads of flour, bacon and iron down to Gunter's Landing in Alabama. He would anchor his boat and spend a month or two in selling out his cargo to the newly settled people. It happened, that one night he went out to a country frolic. Being a lively old buck he took a full hand with them. There was one girl in the crowd who was a little better dressed than the others, having a big flounce or ruffle around the skirt of her dress. She had not taken any part in the dance. So my friend B. concluded to bring her out. She had a large roasted potato in her hand at the time, and stepping in front of her with a very low and courteous bow, he said; "Miss, won't you be so very kind as to take a reel with me?" She whirled about and said: "Here many, hold my 'tater till I dance with this fellow." Dashing into the center of the room with arms swinging right and left and tossing her head into the air with a gyration of the neck, she shouted; "Clear the way here you common sort and let border-tail come out!" And my friend B. said he found the 'most ample test for his powers for endurance. Now, here is a portraiture of the young man of this class with a pistol in his pocket, and when I meet one of them I always think of my old friend B. and his Alabama girl; and, as for that matter I find a great many places for the application. Before dismissing this class let me tell you a secret



upon them. The very presence of a pistol in the pocket of one of them creates a desire to use it. The more he thinks about it the stronger the desire becomes, until it deadens the moral sensibilities and as a final result develops a new fledged criminal. Young man, if you should ever have a lucid moment of reason, I beg of you to throw your pistol into the mill pond and be a man among men. There is also the blood thirsty villian who by nature or habit is insensible to all the nobler impulses of our common humanity, and to whom nothing is sweeter than human gore. When he is armed with a pistol he becomes a very scourge to society. He seeks every possible pretext to satiate his cormorant appetite for blood, and that too without regard to age or condition. And as to the old hardened criminal from whose soul and heart crime has obliterated all sympathy for the good elements of human society and deadened every tie that binds man to his fellow man it is not so strange that he carries a revolver, because he expects to meet at every turn either the stern hand of justice or retribution and consequently he prepares to sell his life at the dearest possible price. What think you of the contrast between the past and the present?

It is, dear reader, an open question as to whether Colt, Wesson and others with their patented inventions and manufacture of pistols have not been the greatest national scourge of

the age. With the pistol has come an avalanche—an inundation of robbers. They bear the ear-marks of pistol paternity. It is the revolver that arrests the railway train, goes through the express and mail cars, appropriating their contents, and rifles the pockets of innocent passengers without regard to age, sex, or condition. It is the chief reliance of the assassin. It steals into the apartments of decrepitude and old age at the still hour of midnight and leaves them stripped of their valuables and occupied by death. The imprints of Colt and Wesson figure in most cases of suicide. By the way, the pistol age is the age of suicides. Singularly enough the presence of the pistol begets in the human mind all manner of evil thoughts and intent. Indeed, it seems to be a fruitful source of the mania for self-destruction. Nor does it regard age or sex.

Now cast up in your mind the immense destruction of human life in which the pistol has been the most potent instrument—the woe and anguish that have settled down upon the innocent and helpless on its account—the sad weeds of widowhood and orphanage, with which the once happy domestic altar has been shrouded, and the many school-house doors which have been thereby closed against helpless orphans, and tell me what this *infant industry* has done for the nation. It seems to me that a little prohibition along this line might do the nation some good.



















